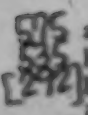
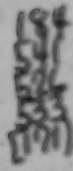
2: Courlander 9-5 (1937-1969) 1969 SV7 Haiti SV3



and covered with tiny mirrors or bits of colored glass. The towering headdress of antlers or papier-mâché sculpture unavoidably recalls similar headdresses in West Africa. Each roi has his own style of dance, which is usually accompanied by drums. It may be a belly dance, a dance of delicate balance, or one of complicated footwork and semiacrobatics such as the imitation of a pair of scissors at work. Throughout the dancing the headdress remains majestically erect.

In addition to the roi Lwalwali and the mâit' Rara (who is constantly in the midst of things, blowing his whistle), there are other traditional Rara personalities: the *major jour*, who juggles with a metal baton (sometimes two or three of these jugglers work together), and the *jongleur*, a juggler or strong man who performs such feats as dancing while holding a fully set table off the ground with his teeth.



On the southwest peninsula, in the region around Jérémie, there is a upsurge of wrestling exhibitions during Rara days. Known as *pingé*, this festival wrestling is done with a background of excited drumming and has a striking resemblance to wrestling traditions in West Africa. Local "champions" will invade a neighboring community, sometimes traveling considerable distances to make a challenge. As in West Africa, some of these wrestlers take their own musicians with them. The musicians often are provided by the village in which the events take place. If a challenge is accepted, the spectators form a large circle, with the wrestlers in the center and the musicians to one side. There may be drums and bamboo flutes, occasionally supplemented by large earthern jars and lengths of bamboo beaten with sticks. The wrestlers are dressed only in shorts. When a man is thrown, the event is over, and another pair of wrestlers takes over. Sometimes a "champion" will take on a series of opponents until he is tired. Afterward he may move on to another community to find new competition, perhaps accompanied by a large group of friends and supporters from his own village. When the Rara season comes to an end, pingé is over for the year. It is one of the few athletic sport activities of the Haitian peasant.

And now and then during Rara a *dobsie* is seen. The *dobsie* is a carved wooden marionette with a short handle below. Its arms and legs are moved by pulling a string. It is usually painted, and sometimes it is dressed. One dobsie observed was provided with a loose devalike costume; when the string was pulled, a large phallus hinged into view in an erect position. This marionette was an object of endless fun-making among spectators.[1]

Another type of marionette is the "Two Kings," made of papier-mâché and operated with strings. The "Two Kings," sitting in a papier-

[1] [Footnote appears in Caleyguy 66, p 351. --Ann'tst]

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mâché carriage or on papier-mâché horses, make their appearance during Rara as well as on the Day of the Kings (*Lez Rois*).

Among the traditional paraphernalia carried by Rara groups are cacaracaque sticks, cha-cha rattles, metal rattles called *tchancy*, a set of rattles on a tall thin pole (called *jouvejouve*), candelabra bearing candles or oil lamps (*lampions*), banners and flags, and such miscellaneous musical instruments as the *grage* scraper, bamboo scraping devices, the *bwa* finger drum, *acoste* (beating boards), and various kinds of secular drums.

The general tone of Rara is nonreligious. The dancing is free from the decorous restraints which characterize most religious ritual, and some early observers of the festival were shocked by what they saw. Some of them went so far as to attribute Haiti's dense population to the "licentious activities" and reckless abandon of the spring carnival. The Catholic Church and some political administrators have sporadically sought to suppress Rara, along with Vodoun ritual. And even today in Port-au-Prince the foreign visitor often is urged to watch the elite Mardi Gras with its floats and mulatto queens as a substitute.

Although Rara has an over-all tone of secular abandon, it has links with both Catholic and Vodoun ritual. Good Friday is given over in great measure to miming the story of Jesus and Judas. A perambulating band may carry an effigy of Judas hanging from a pole. Another will burn the Judas effigy, or drag it in the dust as the crowd moves along the road. In another group a man playing the part of Judas may crawl on his hands and knees along the trail, while Jesus' avengers pursue him with long, cracking whips.

Tying in with Vodoun ritual, virtually all Rara drums and other paraphernalia are "dedicated" or "undedicated" before Lent in special houngan services. And on the last day of Rara, usually late in the night, prayers are said, the lwa are called upon, and some of the festive paraphernalia is thrown into a fire to be consumed.

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Courses 5: *Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors* (pp. 41–74)

"Here that the houngan and the hajkan are performing services normally performed by the *petit* servers.

"Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 183.

"Parsons, *Spirit Cult in Haiti*.

"Statement given by Jean Raoul Pierre.

"Statement: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana.

"Statement given by Yolanda Salomé. A. W. Cardinall notes in his book *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 64): "Elves are in some cases treated with respect. Before a man does business or goes for a canoe he must invariably draw nutrition to the spirit and apologize for the liberties he is about to do it."

"The rite of *nyhsidzi* she is conducted periodically for a *mahi* after the original *Lasi* rite ceremony. The purpose is to "refresh" the loa and make him content with his residence in the head of the devotee.

"Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 113.

"It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain Negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form.

"Viktor Mortensen Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Vaudoux Law," in *Aperçu's A. of Dance, Divine Horsemen*, p. 180.

Courses 6: *Songs of the Principle* (pp. 75–94)

"This theme is further commented on in chap. 13. Compare with the following excerpt from a Bahian song reported by Herskovits in *Suriname Folk Lore* (p. 689):

I have no mother there,
I have no father there,
I have no sister there,
I haven't got anybody there.

Courses 7: *In the Mojere Tree: Magic, Demons, and Conjure* (pp. 95–114)

"Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 69.

"Note the similarities of the term *gris-gris* as used in the United States, where it has the same meaning as magic, or "conjure" charm.

"Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 503.

"Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, p. 103.

Courses 8: *Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Mayguiers, and Kings* (pp. 115–125)

"Leiris, *La Haiti*, p. 46.

"Performances of this kind have been observed in both East and West Africa and are well known in the region of Senegal. I saw a phallic performance, ritually identical with the Haitian version, in the neighborhood of Khartoum, Sudan.

Courses 9: *Land and Work* (pp. 126–141)

"Franklin, *The Present State of Haiti*, p. 360.

"Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, pp. 81, describes Dahomean polygamous marriage in the various forms. Although Dahomean plural marriage is complex in terms of gifts, obligations, and